OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10
MAY 1962 EDITION
GSA GEN. REG. NO. 27

5010-106

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : SAC (157-1067) DATE 7/9/68

FROM : SA WILLIAM H. LAWRENCE

SUBJECT: BLACK ORGANIZING PROJECT (BOP)
RM

On 6/[illegible] [redacted] was instructed to try to establish contact with the Black Organizing Project (BOP), the umbrella group covering the invaders, Black Student Association (BSA) and Afro-American Brotherhood (AAB), which has recently been taken into the Memphis War on Poverty Committee in connection with one of its many projects known as the Neighborhood Organizing Project (NOP). According to the Saturday, 6/22/68, issue of the Memphis Press-Scimitar, the NOP elected CHARLES BALLARD of the AAB, one of the BOP leaders in Memphis, as chairman of its board.

[redacted]

Informant was also alerted that information has been developed that the BSA, affiliate of the BOP, made up of Memphis State University students of the Negro race, is conducting tutoring classes for those high school graduates who are endeavoring to enroll in MSU but who cannot pass entrance examinations.

1 - 157-1067, BOP
1 - 170-1040-Sub, [redacted]
1 - 157-953, BLACK POWER INFILTRATION OF MEMPHIS WAR ON POVERTY COMMITTEE
1 - 170-1024, [redacted]
1 - 157-1070, [redacted]
1 - 157-1000, [redacted]
1 - 157-1238, [redacted]
1 - 157-1125, [redacted]
1 - 100-1394, [redacted]
1 - 157-556, POSSIBLE RACIAL VIOLENCE, MAJOR URBAN AREAS
1 - 157-[redacted]
1 - 157-957, [redacted]
1 - 100-4528, [redacted]

WHL:LF
(13)

157-1067-195
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JUL 10 1968
FBI — MEMPHIS

On 6/26/68 [redacted] that he had called BALLARD on the evening of 6/25/68 [redacted] Informant congratulated BALLARD on his new job and indicated that he was unemployed and would like some work. BALLARD suggested that he come to the War on Poverty office, 161 Jefferson Ave., at 9:00 a.m. 6/26/68 and he would be glad to talk with informant and might be able to work something out.

On the afternoon of 6/26/68, informant stated that he had contacted BALLARD on that morning and that BALLARD has an office in the back of a big room on the 5th floor and his desk sits to the left as one comes in the door. He stated there are a lot of desks in this room and quite a few people were working in this room. BALLARD was talking with some unknown Negro males when informant walked in.

Informant told BALLARD that he was looking for summer employment and that he hoped to enter college during the Fall of 1968, but was apprehensive that he might not be able to pass the entrance exam. He stated he had heard vaguely that someone at Memphis State University (MSU) was offering help in this regard.

BALLARD stated he had heard of this and it was some of the BSA people who were doing this. He specifically mentioned EDWINA HARRELL as one of the BSA students working in this tutorial program. He stated that JAMES E. PHILLIPS, former LeMoyne student, is possibly working with EDWINA in this regard and that he would see both of them and tell them about informant and have one of them get in touch with informant. He took informant's address and phone number. BALLARD stated PHILLIPS had just returned to Memphis from Washington, D. C., where he participated in the Resurrection City demonstration on 6/19/68 and PHILLIPS was arrested along with some other Negroes, but BALLARD did not know the details. He stated PHILLIPS is now back in Memphis.

BALLARD gave informant an application to apply for one of the jobs in connection with the War on Poverty Committee (WOPC) and specifically the NOP. He stated that the application would have to be passed on by the board which met about once a week and there was a possibility that the NOP would teach black history in one of four sections of the city or possibly all four sections of the city. He stated that the board is integrated and that it has some white members from various colleges in Memphis working on it.

On 6/27/68 informant stated that he had gone to the scheduled Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) meeting at Clayborn Temple, 280 Hernando, Memphis, the night of 6/27/68 at which HERMAN O'NEIL, aka O'Neal, Lester High School teacher and one of the activists from Memphis in the Poor Peoples Campaign, Resurrection City project in Washinton, was one of the main speakers. Informant arrived too late to hear O'NEIL speak but did hear part of a speech by GEORGE HUNT, track coach and teacher at Carver High School, who has also been one of the leaders in the SCLC Resurrection City movement, Memphis contingent. He stated that while at the temple he saw CHARLES BALLARD and in talking with BALLARD and CHARLES CABBAGE and JOHN B. SMITH, all of the BOP, he saw one TONY, a Negro male with a medium-high Afro haircut and a goatee, is 6' 1" tall, 26 to 28 year of age, with a medium build and brown skin, has flat feet and shuffles when he walks. He allegedly drives a 1965 or 1966 Chevrolet, wears a fancy tiki in the shape of a man's head with real hair and beard glued thereto.

BALLARD stated in the presence of those mentioned above that the NOP of which he is head will have many courses to teach young Negroes in Memphis of black art and culture and this group will teach the teachings of the late MALCOLM X LITTLE, former Black Muslim and black revolutionary who was assassinated in New York several years ago BALLARD bragged that MALCOLM X had made some excellent tapes prior to his death and that his group planned to play these tapes in connection with their teaching sponsored by the BOP.

JOHN E. SMITH, BALLARD, CABBAGE and others not known later went to the rear of the church to one of the Sunday School rooms for a meeting. They did not invite informant.

Someone prior to this asked what had happened to COBY SMITH, Southwestern student, a Negro male formerly very close in association with CABBAGE, and someone else said COBY was not working directly with them but was working in East Memphis.

Informant hung around and heard GEORGE HUNT say something to the effect that the SCLC movement in Memphis will be nonviolent but will be extremely militant, that if necessary, the members in their actions will be willing to be arrested and go to jail for indefinite periods. He indicated there are 30 cities throughout the U. S. in which miniature Resurrection Cities will be built and he mentioned something about GERALD FANION, press representative of the SCLC on loan from the Tennessee Council on Human Relations, going to see some high city official in Memphis on 6/27/68 in an effort to get a permit to build a Resurrection City in downtown Memphis.

Another speaker was a large heavy-set Negro in his middle 30's by the name of WILLIAMS (FNU). He also mentioned that FANION was going to try to get a permit to build a Resurrection City in Memphis. There were about 250 people present at this meeting, and no specific mention was made while informant was present of any future meetings, although it is apparent there will be some.

While there, informant saw JOHN HENRY FERGUSON, one of the original black power advocates who was arrested several times during the February through April sanitation strike in Memphis. FERGUSON stated that he is now working and had just gotten off work. He was extremely well dressed, very neat, and had on a dark blue suit, necktie and is now wearing regular glasses with horn rims. He had a hurt hand, saying he recently got it in a fight.

Informant then recalled that the (FNU) WILLIAMS stated that Memphis would soon have a permanent SCLC chapter but he did not elaborate.

It is not known for sure who TONY might be but it is recalled that recently [redacted] advised that one TONY, who fits the general description of the TONY described by [redacted] has recently been possibly selling marijuana to some of the BOP people at the Log Cabin Inn on South Parkway West.

Corroboration of information from informant has been independently furnished by informant code name [redacted] of the Memphis PD and will be incorporated in a separate memorandum for pertinent files.

Informant stated he will do his best to infiltrate this group and try to keep abreast of their activities to the best of his ability.